

# **EXHIBIT A**

## Lebanon's Central Bank governor charged with corruption

AP [apnews.com/article/middle-east-business-beirut-lebanon-riad-salameh-c319b05680621a801b9798b3de49cb0a](https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-business-beirut-lebanon-riad-salameh-c319b05680621a801b9798b3de49cb0a)

February 23, 2023



FILE - A Protester holds Lebanese pounds as he stands in front of burning tires they set on fire, in front the Central Bank building, where the anti-government demonstrators rally against the Lebanese Central Bank Governor Riad Salameh and the deepening financial crisis in Beirut, on Jan. 25, 2023. Angry protesters in Lebanon Thursday Feb. 16, 2023 smashed windows and set tires on fire outside two of the country's biggest banks in the capital city, as the value of the local currency hit a new low and poverty deepens. (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar, File)

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB February 23, 2023 GMT

BEIRUT (AP) — Beirut's public prosecutor on Thursday charged the governor of cash-strapped Lebanon's Central Bank, his brother and an associate with corruption, Lebanese officials said.

The development comes one month after a European judicial delegation from France, Germany, and Luxembourg visited Lebanon to question Gov. Riad Salameh and dozens of other individuals over suspected corruption after five European state opened cases against him.

Since 2019, Lebanon has been in the throes of the worst economic and financial crisis in its modern history, rooted in decades of corruption and mismanagement. Three quarters of the country's population of 6 million now lives in poverty.

The 72-year-old Salameh was once hailed as the guardian of Lebanon's financial stability but many now hold him responsible for the crisis, citing policies that drove up national debt and caused the Lebanese pound to lose more than 90% of its value against the dollar.

The governor, who has held the post since April 1993, still enjoys the backing of top politicians.

According to two judicial officials, Beirut's Attorney General Raja Hamoush charged Salameh, his assistant Marianne Howaiyak, and his brother Raja Salameh with embezzling public funds, forgery, illicit enrichment, money-laundering, and violation of tax laws. The two officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

One of the officials told The Associated Press the charges raised Thursday may delay an anticipated, follow-up visit by the European judicial delegation.

Just before the announcement, a German Embassy delegation showed up at the Justice Palace in Beirut to meet with Lebanon's chief prosecutor, Ghassan Oweidat. But Oweidat refused to meet with them, citing his work schedule, the official said.

No further details were provided and it wasn't immediately clear if Oweidat's action was connected to Hamoush's charges against Salameh, which were announced shortly after.

Activists, lawyers, and critics of Salameh have questioned the personal wealth the governor has amassed over the years, but he has repeatedly insisted he had earned it prior to his appointment as governor, while working as an investment banker for Merrill Lynch for nearly two decades.

Salameh said his last salary as a banker was \$2 million a year, and that he had a fortune worth \$23 million, plus property he had acquired and "wisely invested" in to grow his wealth, before he became governor.

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